



## Fact Sheet:



# Facts and Figures On Methamphetamine

## Background

- Methamphetamine is a strong central nervous system stimulant. The drug produces a state of increased energy, suppressed appetite, and elevated mood; effects may last as long as 10-12 hours vs. 45 minutes obtained from cocaine. The drug is easily produced, widely available, inexpensive to buy, and easy to use.
- Use can be devastating socially, physiologically, economically, and environmentally. Dependence occurs swiftly. Many use the drug in combination with alcohol and marijuana; like cocaine and heroin, it can be smoked, snorted, or injected.
- Chronic use is highly toxic; the body essentially burns itself up. Chronic use can lead to malnutrition, paranoia, confusion, anxiety, sleeplessness, aggressiveness, heart failure, seizures, coma, and death.
- Methamphetamine can harm the developing fetus, increase an individual's risk of developing AIDS and other diseases (via needle sharing, rough sex, and lack of protection with condoms), cause serious driver impairment, and be dangerous when mixed with other licit or illicit drugs.

## California Alcohol and Other Drug System (CADDs) Statistics

- CADDs collects client data from all publicly monitored treatment providers in California.
- Methamphetamine is now the most commonly reported primary drug in CADDs, surpassing alcohol and heroin.
- The most current five years of CADDs data (SFY 97/98 through SFY 01/02) shows that except for SFY 01/02 the percentage of clients admitted with a primary methamphetamine problem remained fairly constant at between 18 and 21 percent of all clients. Client counts with a primary methamphetamine problem increased slightly from SFY 97/98 to SFY 00/01 from 27,293 to 29,470.
- There was a sizeable increase in both the percentage (20.6 percent to 26.5 percent) of all clients and number (29,470 to 43,408) of clients admitted for primary methamphetamine use from SFY 00/01 to SFY 01/02. Most of this increase in the percentage and number of clients seen for methamphetamine use was because of a large increase in the numbers of individuals referred from the criminal

justice system, in particular those referred to treatment from the Substance Abuse Crime Prevention Act (SACPA).

- For a five year period, the percentage of clients under 21 years of age with a primary methamphetamine problem decreased slightly from 13.3 percent of the clients in SFY 97/98 to 11.6 percent in SFY 01/02.
- The percent of caucasian clients with a primary methamphetamine problem decreased steadily, from 70.1 percent in SFY 97/98 to 60.5 percent in SFY 01/02. During those five years, the percent of Hispanic clients with a primary methamphetamine problem increased steadily, from 20.2 percent in SFY 97/98 to 28.7 percent in SFY 01/02.

### **National Population Prevalence Estimate**

- There are no reliable estimates of the total numbers of Californians using methamphetamines. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Results From the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, more than 12 million people in the U.S. age 12 and older (5.3 percent) reported that they had used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime.

### **Emergency Room Mentions**

- The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) collects drug mention data from a national sample of

emergency rooms. In California, three standard metropolitan service areas (SMSAs) are included: Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco. Total methamphetamine mentions in emergency rooms in these areas showed an increase of 43.1 percent, from 2,123 in 1998 to 3,038 in 2002.

### **Methamphetamine Lab Seizures**

- Nationally, methamphetamine lab seizures steadily increased from 3,811 in 1998 to 9,236 in 2002. During that period, California's percentage of the total methamphetamine lab seizures each year decreased from 1,749 in 1998 to 1,130 in 2002. During 2002 (most current data available) the six counties with the largest numbers of lab seizures were San Bernardino (223), Riverside (187), Los Angeles (162), Stanislaus (47), Butte (41), and Orange (41).